

Message Text

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42

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /058 W

----- 073569

R 111015Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4899

INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ABU DHABI 2440

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : PINT, TC

SUBJECT : TRIUMPHAL RETURN FOR SHAIKH ZAYED

REF: ABU DHABI 2120, ABU DHABI 2300

1. SHAIKH ZAYED RETURNED TO ABU DHABI THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 9, TO BE GREETED BY LARGE AND ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD PRAISING HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEMANDING THAT HE CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT OF UAE. (REFTELS) GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE LOCAL PRESS, NOT NOTED FOR ITS ABILITY TO PROGNOSTICATE, HAD BEEN PREDICTING FOR SEVERAL DAYS THAT SUCH A WELCOME WOULD AWAIT SHAIKH ZAYED, ONE CANNOT CHALK THIS DEMONSTRATION UP TO A GROUND SWELL OF SPONTANEOUS ENTHUSIASM. IT WAS NEVERTHELESS IMPRESSIVE.

2. THE AIRPORT BALCONY WAS FILLED WITH SOME ONE THOUSAND BANNER CARRYING STUDENTS, GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, ET AL. CENTRALLY LOCATED CHEERING SECTION COMPLETE WITH MICROPHONE HOOKED UP TO LOUD SPEAKER TRUCK, KEPT UP THE ENTHUSIASM DURING THE SEVERAL HOUR WAIT FOR THE

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PLANE TO ARRIVE. SLOGANS AND BANNERS PREDICTABLY CALLED

ON ZAYED TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE AND PRAISED HIS EFFORTS
ON BEHALF OF UNION -- E.G. "NO SUBSTITUTE FOR YOU,
ZAYED", "YOUR LEADERSHIP OF UNION IS STRENGTH TO US
AND THE ARABS", "LONG LIVE ZAYED LEADER OF THE UNION",
"UNION IS STRENGTH, OH RULERS". ON THE TARMAC, IN
ADDITION TO FURTHER CROWDS WITH BANNERS, WERE ASSEMBLED
ALL THE LEADING LIGHTS--DIPLOMATIC CORPS, GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS, MILITARY AND OF COURSE THE RULING FAMILIES
OF ABU DHABI AND THE OTHER EMIRATES. THERE HAD TO BE
SEVERAL HUNDRED OF US--MORE THAN EVEN WERE ASSEMBLED
FOR KING KHALID'S VISIT LAST MARCH--TRULY A GOOD SHOW
FOR A HOT STICKY NIGHT IN RAMADAN.

3. ON ARRIVAL, AFTER EXCHANGING SHAIKHLY GREETINGS WITH
RASHED, SAQR, ET AL AT PLANE SIDE, ZAYED MOVED TOWARDS
THE CROWDS AND FRANKLY NEARLY GOT MOBBED. IT WOULD
HAVE BEEN A SECRET SERVICE MAN'S NIGHTMARE. EVEN
HERE ONE SAW THE COURT CHAMBERLAIN AND MFA PROTOCOL
OFFICERS USED TO NOTHING MORE STRENUEOUS THAN LINING
UP DIPLOMATICS, LINKING ARMS AND FIGHTING TO HOLD BACK
CROWDS SO SHAIKH ZAYED COULD MOVE DOWN THE LINE.
PREDICTABLY, ZAYED SEEMED UNCONCERNED AND IN FACT
WAS CLEARLY ENJOYING HIMSELF. ONCE THE HANDSHAKES
WERE OVER, HOWEVER, HE WAS QUICKLY HUSTLED AWAY FROM
HIS OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC WELL WISHERS.

4. COMMENT: IMPRESSIVE AS IT WAS, WHAT IT ALL ADDS UP
TO IS ANOTHER QUESTION. AND WHAT SHAIKH RASHED THOUGHT
OF THE WHOLE EXERCISE (HE WAS TOO FAR AWAY TO OBSERVE
HIS SOMETIMES HIGHLY EXPRESSIVE COUNTENANCE) WOULD BE
INTERESTING TO KNOW. CLEARLY, HOWEVER, WITH ZAYED NOW
BACK, THE JOCKEYING FOR CONCESSIONS OF INCREASED POWER
AND GREATER UNITY IN RETURN FOR HIS CONTINUATION AS
PRESIDENT WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST. PRINCE FAHD IS RE-
PORTEDLY DUE TO PAY UAE VISIT IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND
PRESUMABLY HE TOO WILL GET INVOLVED IN THIS EXERCISE.
IN SHORT, THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF RAMADAN ARE LIKELY TO
BE BIT MORE LIVELY THAN THE FIRST TWO.

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